

STAY HEALTHY OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER.

As we welcome the warmer weather to our area, the Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) would like to take a moment to remind all of it's residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors safely.

We want your outdoor experiences to be full of great memories and free from illness. To that extent we have developed this guide to cover common outdoor risks that you or your family may encounter while outside. Topics in this guide include tickborne illnesses and prevention, preventing exposures to rabies and how to avoid heat-related illnesses.

For additional information and resources on these topics please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov or the Virginia Department of Health's website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/

DON'T GET TICKED: Prevent tickborne diseases

Spring and summer bring warm temperatures, just right for walking in the woods and other outdoor activities. Warm weather also means that ticks become more active and this can increase the risk of a tick-borne disease. The tick-borne diseases that occur most often in Virginia are Lyme disease Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and ehrlichiosis.

Lyme Disease is spread by the black-legged (deer) tick. Lyme disease transmission can occur any time of the year, but is most common during the late spring and early summer when young (nymph stage)



Blacklegged Tick
Source: CDC

ticks are active and feeding. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans (bullseye rash).

Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) is caused by the American dog tick. The tick needs to feed on a person for only four hours to transmit the illness. So prompt tick removal is important. Symptoms of RMSF include fever, headache, abdominal pain, vomiting, and muscle pain. A rash may also develop, but is often absent in the first few days, and in some patients, never devel-

ops. Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be a severe or even fatal illness if not treated in the first few days of symptoms.

Ehrlichiosis is transmitted to humans by the lone star tick. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and muscle aches. Usually, these symptoms occur within 1-2 weeks following a tick bite.

Preventing Tick-borne Diseases

While it is a good idea to take preventive measures against ticks year-round, be extra vigilant in warmer months (April-September) when ticks are most active.

The following steps can reduce your risk of tick-borne diseases:

- Recognize potential tick infested areas, such as leaf litter, tall grass and vegetation in forests and along forest margins.
- Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks are easier to see and remove.
- Tuck pant legs into socks and boots, tuck shirts into pants, and wear long-sleeved shirts buttoned at the wrist.



American Dog Tick
Source: CDC

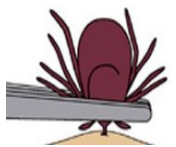


Lone Star Tick
Source: CDC

- Conduct tick checks on yourself and your children every four hours while in tick habitat.
- Apply tick repellent to areas of the body and clothing that may come in contact with grass and brush. The most effective repellent products for use on skin contain DEET [up to 50% DEET for adults, and 30% for children]. Repellent products containing permethrin are also highly effective, but may only be applied to shoes and clothing and not to skin.

Prompt Tick Removal is important in preventing illness.

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.



STAY RABIES FREE: Avoid wildlife

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. It kills almost any mammal or human that gets sick from it. The rabies virus is mainly in the saliva and brain of rabid animals. It can be transmitted through a bite or by getting saliva or brain tissue in a wound or in the eye or mouth. Only mammals get rabies; birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians do not. Wild animals frequently diagnosed with rabies are bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes. Cats are the most common domestic animal diagnosed with rabies. Rabbits, squirrels, rats and mice and small pets like gerbils and hamsters seldom get it. More than 90% of all animal rabies cases reported to CDC each year occur in wild animals.

It's this easy to pick up rabies....



Avoid contact with stray and wild animals



STAY RABIES FREE: continued from page 1

Preventing a potential exposure

Every year in the U.S., antirabies treatment is given for approximately 40,000 potential exposures to rabies. While this treatment is available for those who are exposed to rabies, it can be a very expensive and uncomfortable process. Avoiding a possible exposure is the best way to protect yourself from rabies. This includes vaccinating any pets against rabies and avoiding contact with wild and unfamiliar animals. Do not feed or handle wild animals, even if they seem friendly. If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report it to animal control.

If You've Been Bitten:

Don't panic...but don't ignore the bite either.

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and lots of water. Washing thoroughly will greatly lessen the chance of infection.
- If possible, capture the animal under a large box or can, or at least identify it before it runs away.
- Don't try to pick the animal up. Call an animal control or law enforcement officer to come get it.
- Don't damage the head of any animal that might need to be tested for rabies. The brain will be needed for the test.

- It's critically important that you notify your doctor immediately and explain how you got the bite.
- Consult with your doctor or the Health Department to determine if antirabies treatment is needed.
- If the animal is available for testing or observation, often antirabies treatment can be avoided.

Report the bite to the local health department and animal control.

Do not feed or handle wild animals, even if they seem friendly. If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report it to animal control

BEAT THE HEAT: Prevent dehydration and heat induced illness

People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to compensate and properly cool themselves. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. Outdoor activity in warm weather must be balanced with measures that aid the body's cooling mechanisms and prevent heat-related illness.

The risk for heat related illnesses is increased when individuals:

- Wear clothing that prevents their sweat from evaporating easily and cooling their body

- Drink alcohol, which affects the body's ability to regulate temperature
- Become dehydrated, due to inadequate water intake to replenish fluids lost through perspiration

Some people are at increased risk of heat related illness even when the heat index is relatively low. These individuals should be monitored closely for signs of illness. Children and the elderly are especially at risk for heat related complications because they are less able to cope with changes in body temperature and they are more susceptible to dehydration. Individuals with chronic health conditions or those who are taking certain medications such as vasoconstrictors, beta blockers and diuretics are also at increased risk of heat related illness.

- Drink water or other fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, *even if you don't feel thirsty*. If you have clear, pale urine, you are probably drinking enough fluids. Dark-colored urine is an indication that you're dehydrated.
- Remember that heat-related illnesses are not only caused by high temperatures and a loss of fluids, but also a lack of salt in the body. Some sports drinks can help replenish the salt in your body lost through sweating.
- Avoid beverages that contain caffeine (such as tea, coffee and soda) or alcohol.
- Schedule vigorous outdoor activities for cooler times of the day.
- During an outdoor activity, take frequent breaks.

Is it Heat Exhaustion or Heat Stroke?

Heat Exhaustion

- heavy sweating with cool skin
- shallow pulse
- fainting or dizziness
- nausea & vomiting
- exhaustion
- headaches

Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs

Heat Stroke

- high fever (105+)
- hot, red, dry skin
- rapid, weak pulse
- rapid shallow breathing
- not sweating

Call 9-1-1 immediately!

How can I prevent heat illness?

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat or using an umbrella.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more.
- Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity.

